

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /065 W
-----019062 090037Z /65

R 081610Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4873
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1972

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GR
SUBJ: STUDENT ELECTIONS: THE LEFT WINS AGAIN

1. COMPLETING A PROCESS THAT BEGAN IN JANUARY, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION OF GREECE (EFEE) SELECTED ITS NEW LEADERSHIP FOR THE COMING YEAR ON MARCH 6. NOT SURPRISINGLY, GIVEN THE STRONG SHOWING OF THE LEFT IN THE ELECTIONS THAT BEGAN THIS PROCESS, THE NEW EFEE LEADERSHIP IS COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF LEFTISTS, WITH PASOK, FOR EXAMPLE, MANAGING TO HANG ONTO THE PRESIDENCY, THE MOSCOW-LINE EXTERIOR COMMUNISTS (KKE-EXTERIOR) RECEIVING THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY GENERAL, AND THE DISSIDENT INTERIOR COMMUNISTS (KKE-INTERIOR) NAILING DOWN THE POSITIONS OF VICE PRESIDENT.

2. THE SELECTION OF THE EFEE LEADERSHIP BEGAN WITH ELECTIONS HELD AT ALL GREEK UNIVERSITIES. SOME 50,000 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE ELECTION, OR ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF THE ACTIVE STUDENT BODY. CANDIDATES REPRESENTING STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AFFILIATED WITH VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES
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OR GROUPS RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING PERCENTAGES OF THE VOTE:

AFFILIATED WITH	PERCENTAGE
KKE-EXTERIOR	30
PASOK	28
KKE-INTERIOR	16

NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY	12
COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE (MARXIST-LENINIST)	5
REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST MOVEMENT OF GREECE (EKKE)	3
UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER	2
OTHERS	4

ONE OF THE MORE INTERESTING ASPECTS OF THE STUDENT ELECTIONS WAS THE VICIOUS SNIPING BETWEEN PASOK AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE EXTERIOR, A PATTERN IN AREAS WHERE THE TWO PARTIES ARE COMPETING. (THE TWO CONTINUE TO BE VIRTUALLY INDISTINGUISHABLE, HOWEVER, IN THEIR ANTI-AMERICAN RHETORIC.) BUT EVEN MORE GENERALLY, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE STUDENT LEFT IS ANYTHING BUT UNITED AND THERE WILL BE CONTINUED INFIGHTING AMONG THE VARIOUS FACTIONS.

3. THE LEFT'S STRONG SHOWING IN THIS YEAR'S ELECTION IS IN LINE WITH STUDENT ELECTION RESULTS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS. THE LEFT'S SUPREMACY ON THE CAMPUSES IS A GREAT TRANSFORMATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY SITUATION PRIOR TO 1967 WHEN THE RIGHT AND THE CENTER PREVAILED. OBVIOUSLY "LEFTISM", OF A KIND MORE RADICAL THAN THAT PREVAILING AMONG ADULT GREEK LEFTISTS, CONTINUES TO BE FASHIONABLE AMONG GREEK YOUTH. WHILE GREEK RIGHTISTS PROFESS ALARM

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AT THE SITUATION, MANY MODERATE GREEKS POINT TO THE RELATIVELY HIGH ABSTENTION RATE IN THE ELECTIONS, CLAIMING THAT MOST NON-PARTICIPANTS ARE MODERATES AND RIGHTISTS. MODERATES WHO TAKE THE "LONG VIEW" ALSO FEEL THAT MANY OF TODAY'S YOUNG LEFTISTS WILL MOVE TO THE RIGHT ONCE THEY LEAVE THE UNIVERSITIES.

4. WHILE THIS LONG VIEW UNDOUBTEDLY CONTAINS A COMFORTING DEGREE OF TRUTH, IT IS ALSO FAIR TO SAY THAT ITS YOUTHFUL FOLLOWING IS AN IMPORTANT ASSET TO THE LEFT. STUDENTS CAN BE IMPORTANT INSTRUMENTS IN MOBILIZING BROADER POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE PARENT POLITICAL PARTY -- AS ANDREAS PAPANDREOU DEMONSTRATED WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS IN LAST YEAR'S NATIONAL ELECTIONS. STUDENT GROUPS ARE ALSO ABLE TO ORGANIZE LARGE DEMONSTRATIONS TO GIVE RESONANCE TO LEFTIST CAUSES. ONE DANGER IS THAT STREET DEMONSTRATIONS CAN LEAD TO VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE POLICE. THUS FAR MOST LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ENCOURAGED THEIR YOUTHFUL FOLLOWERS TO AVOID SUCH CONFRONTATIONS DESPITE THE LATTER'S INCLINATIONS TO ENGAGE IN THEM. IN THIS SENSE, ESPECIALLY, THE NEW EFEE LEADERSHIP WILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE.

MILLS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: STUDENTS, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ATHENS01972
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780105-0361
Format: TEL
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780395/aaaadcec.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c4d797cb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3410213
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STUDENT ELECTIONS: THE LEFT WINS AGAIN
TAGS: PINT, GR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c4d797cb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014